

The Ranking Republican on the Committee on House Administration Applauds House Passage of National Defense Authorization Act; Says Military Voting Provisions Included will Mitigate the Appalling □ Disenfranchisement of Military Voters

WASHINGTON - Today, after House passage of the National Defense Authorization Act, the Ranking Republican on the Committee on House Administration, Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Calif., issued the following statement applauding the military voting provisions included in the bill:

"I am extremely pleased with the authorization's important military voting provisions that will help to rectify the shocking and deplorable disenfranchisement of our military voters serving overseas. According to recent studies, only about 25 percent of the absentee ballots requested by military personnel serving overseas get counted - figures that most Americans would find sobering and unacceptable.

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"The included voting provisions - among them language based on the Military Voting Protection Act sponsored by Representative McCarthy and approved by our Committee - will help reduce the number of disenfranchised military voters by allowing for the electronic request and transmission of blank absentee ballots, ensuring adequate time for ballot transmission, and expediting the collection and return delivery of completed ballots.

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"Of course, these provisions are only the first steps to righting a long-standing wrong. Over the course of the past year, our Committee has successfully fought to reverse a Department of Veterans Affairs' policy so that all veteran facilities have voter registration services and unrestricted access to the electoral process. And now our Committee has before it legislation that would require all higher educational institutions to provide voter registration services to eligible students. Yet, a provision requiring overseas military installations to provide the same registration services to military personnel was removed from this authorization."

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"Why would we do more to increase voter registration access in social service agencies, VA facilities and educational institutions than at military installations? Why are we not doing everything possible to increase voter registration services so that our brave men and women overseas can exercise the very right they are fighting to protect?"

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"Again, I am extremely pleased with the military voting provisions included in this authorization, but I strongly believe that we can and must do more."

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.